

Idaho Water Utilities

The Idaho Public Utilities Commission regulates 25 privately operated water companies varying from United Water Idaho with more than 70,000 customers to utilities serving a few homes in residential subdivisions or mobile home parks. Regulated companies comprise less than 1 percent of approximately 2,600 systems that supply drinking water to Idahoans. Most of the unregulated systems belong to and are run without profit by homeowners associations. Many others are municipal systems operated by local governments.

The rates listed are strictly representative of residential customers and may not reflect actual rates paid by a specific customer.

Name of Utility	No. of Customers	Hook-up Fee	Mo. Residential Rates ¹ (unless otherwise noted)	Date Rates Last Revised
Bar Circle "S" Water Inc.	118	250	\$15/0-7,500 gals. \$0.95/1,000 gals. over 7,500 gals.	02/01/90
Bitterroot Water Co.	97	\$750	\$20/0-15,000 gals. \$0.75/1,000 gals. over 15,000 gals.	08/12/99
Brian Water Co.	47		\$10.50/0-4,000 gals. \$1.08/1,000 gals. over 4,000 gals.	05/01/99
Capitol Water Corp.	2,757		\$7.50/0-1,000 cf. \$1.06/100 cf. over 1,000 cf.	08/01/97
Country Club Hills Utilities	120	\$300	\$14.00/0-30,000 gals. \$0.35/1,000 gals. over 30,000 gals.	02/23/90
Eagle Water Co., Inc.	2,272	\$845	\$7.84/0-600 cf. \$0.451/100 cf. over 600 cf.	03/25/87
Humpy's	16	\$60	\$3.25/0-6,000 gals. \$0.10/1,000 gals. over 6,000 gals.	05/01/63
Evergreen Water Co.	34	\$600	\$15/0-7,500 gals. \$0.35/1,000 gals. over 7,500 gals.	11/10/87
Falls Water Co., Inc.	2,106	\$500	\$10/0-20,000 gals. \$0.30/1,000 gals. over 20,000 gals.	Date 09/01/97
Algoma Water	27		\$17.59/mo.	09/01/96
Grouse Point Water Co.	22		\$25.00/mo.	09/01/99

**IPUC
Regulates
About 1% Of
Idaho's Water
Systems**

Name of Utility	No. of Customers	Hook-up Fee	Mo. Residential Rates¹ (unless otherwise noted)	Rates Last Revised
Happy Valley Water System	26	\$500	\$27.00/0-20,000 gals. \$0.70/1,000 over 20,000 gals.	12/15/99
Island Park Water Co.	259		\$125/yr.	07/01/92
Morning View Water Co., Inc.	59		\$22/mo.	06/21/90
Murray Water Works	33	\$125 + labor	\$26/mo.	11/01/94
Packsaddle Estates Water Co.	34	\$430	\$34.24/mo.	06/03/96
Picabo Livestock Co.	28	\$500	Summer: \$26/mo. Winter: \$14/mo.	04/27/94
Rickel Water Co.	16	\$6,000	\$30/0-15,000 gals. \$1.10/1,000 gals. over 15,000 gals.	04/25/97
Spirit Lake East Water Co.	237	\$650	\$12/0-9,000 gals. \$1/1,000 gals. over 9,000 gals.	12/01/83
Stoneridge Water Co.	34	\$925	\$0.30/1000 gals. For all consumption	12/01/99
Sunbeam Water Co.	22		\$12/0-12,000 gals. \$1.20/1,000 gals. over 12,000 gals.	05/31/83
Troy Hoffman Water Co.	144	\$458	\$5.50/0-3,000 gals. \$0.60/1,000 gals. over 3,000 gals.	08/01/96
United Water Idaho	70,562	Costs in excess of \$500	Summer: \$14.57/bimonthly \$1.6418/1,000 gals. Winter: \$14.57/bimonthly \$1.3134/1,000 gals.	09/05/98

Water Utility Cases

Nov. 19, 2001

Bar Circle “S” Ranch Water Co./Garwood Business Center Water System

Case No. BCS-W-01-1, Order No. 28895

The commission approved the purchase of the Garwood Business Center Water System in Kootenai County by Bar Circle “S” Water, Inc. for \$50,000.

Bar Circle, operating near Hayden Lake, provides metered water service to 117 residential customers and one commercial customer. The commission also approved extending Bar Circle’s certificated area to serve to two areas previously undeveloped. The company did not seek a change in rates.

Dec. 6, 2001

Falls Water Company

Case No. FLS-W-01-1

The Idaho Public Utilities Commission authorized an annual increase in revenue of 9.94 percent for Falls Water Company of Idaho Falls. That allows the company to collect an additional \$31,198 from its approximately 2,000 business and residential customers east of Idaho Falls and north of Ammon.

Falls Water originally requested authority to collect \$91,180 from customers or a 38 percent revenue increase. The new rates went into effect Dec. 1.

For metered residential customers the minimum charge remains \$10 for the first 20,000 gallons. The charge for every gallon beyond that increases from 30 cents per gallon to 33 cents. The company proposed \$12.65 for the first 10,000 gallons and 37 cents per gallon beyond that. The same rate applies to commercial customers on meters.

For flat-rate residential customers and for those in multi-family units, the new charge is \$13.73 per month. The existing rate is \$10 per month and the company proposed \$13.90.

The flat rate for commercial customers of \$10 per month on the first 20,000 gallons and 30 cents for every gallon beyond that was eliminated.

The commission’s order allows the company to earn a 12 percent return on equity. A 10 percent return is typically considered adequate to build a reserve, but the commission allowed the 12 percent return given the company’s expansion needs and the fact that its reserve is depleted. Falls Water is a not-for-profit corporation and is not authorized to make any distributions of return on investment to owners, but can use retained earnings for expansion and improvements.

The commission also ordered the company to charge its customers in

the Grayson Subdivision the same fixed price it charges all its other customers. Falls Water purchased the Sargent Water System, which serves Grayson Subdivision, in 1997. It also directed the company to discontinue serving those in Black Hawk Estates, a separate noncontiguous water system, at the same rate it is billing other metered customers of Falls Water. Because Black Hawk Estates has fewer customers it is more costly to serve them. There are not sufficient revenues to support the expenses associated with Black Hawk Estates, the commission said.

The commission directed Falls Water to remove revenues and expenses associated with Black Hawk from the Falls Water system. If service is to continue, the commission ordered the company to enter into a cost-based agreement with Black Hawk Estates.

May 23, 2002

Capitol Water Corporation

Case No. CAP-W-02-1, Order No. 29035

The Idaho Public Utilities Commission approved a \$3.10 per month surcharge for the nearly 3,000 southwest Boise residential customers of Capitol Water Corp. Metered commercial customers will get a 23.6 percent increase.

The company proposed a surcharge of \$3.56 per month for residential customers and a 21.1 percent increase for metered commercial customers. For the majority of customers who use a ¾"-inch service line, the added service charge will increase monthly bills by about 35 percent during the summer months and 15 percent in the winter months.

The surcharge, which will expire in seven years, is needed to pay for \$500,000 in improvements to the system including one well replacement and an upgrade of the company's distribution system.

The new surcharge is on top of a surcharge approved in 1997 that expires on Aug. 1, 2004. That surcharge, also for seven years, is \$3.27 per month for unmetered residential customers and a 25.2 percent increase for metered commercial customers.

The water system serves customers bounded roughly by Northview Street north to Ustick Road and from North Maple Grove east to Curtis Road.

The company's Well No. 2 failed due to a casing collapse and Well No. 5 was abandoned in 2000 due to contamination problems. Well No. 5 must be replaced as soon as possible, the company said, to provide adequate water supply for fire protection and peak hour demands. According to the company, the cost to replace that well is estimated to be about \$346,000 in addition to \$45,350 already spent on costs associated with abandoning the well. The company also plans to spend about \$90,000 for a distribution upgrade in addition to \$13,900 it has already spent.

The commission ordered the company to submit written quarterly status reports detailing construction progress, money spent and testing results.

August 29, 2002

Morning View Water Co.
Case No. MNV-W-02-1

The Idaho Public Utilities Commission approved rate increases for the approximate 56 rural Rigby customers of Morning View Water Co.

The former rate, not changed since 1990, was a \$22 flat fee plus a public drinking water fee of \$6.67. The new rate, effective on Sept. 1, 2002, is based on lot size. The rate is \$22 per month for a quarter-acre lot, \$28.85 per month for a half-acre, and \$35.70 for an acre. The commission also approved an additional \$5 per month customer surcharge to fund a contingency reserve account.

The owner of the company, Nolan Gneiting, originally requested to increase rates to \$52 per month, a 136 percent increase. After a public hearing was conducted in Rigby, the commission determined the new rates.

The reserve account will ensure more reliable service by providing a fund for unanticipated major repairs. It may also be used to retire an outstanding amount owed for well repair.

Regulating Idaho's Railroads

More than 900 miles of railroad track in Idaho have been abandoned since 1976. Rail line abandonments are governed by federal law, with the federal Surface Transportation Board deciding the final outcome of abandonment applications. Under Idaho law, however, after a railroad files its federal notice of intent to abandon, the IPUC must determine whether the proposed abandonment would adversely affect the public interest. The commission then reports its findings to the STB.

In reaching a conclusion, the commission considers whether abandonment would adversely affect the service area, impair market access or access of Idaho communities to vital goods and services, and whether the line has a potential for profitability.

The commission also conducts inspections of Idaho's railroads to determine compliance with state and federal laws, rules and regulations concerning the transportation of hazardous materials, locomotive cab safety and sanitation rules, and railroad - highway grade crossings.

Hazardous material inspections are conducted in rail yards and at shipping facilities. In 1994, Idaho was invited to participate in the Federal Railroad Administration's State Participation Program. IPUC has a State Program Manager and one FRA certified hazardous material inspector.

Since 1997, the IPUC has been working with railroads, labor unions, and the FRA to improve locomotive cab working conditions. This includes random inspections to determine overall cab cleanliness, sanitation facilities, first aid requirements and the availability of fresh cold drinking water.

The IPUC inspects railroad-highway grade crossings where incidents occur, investigates citizen complaints of unsafe or rough crossings and conducts surveys of railroad crossings.

Railroad Activity Summary

Fiscal Year 2001

Tank Cars Inspected	469
Freight Cars Inspected	149
Trains Inspected	67
Defects Disclosed	104
Violation Reports to FRA	21
Crossing Accidents Investigated	16
Crossing Complaints	33
Crossings Surveyed	199
Locomotives Inspected	42
Locomotives with Deficiencies	33

Operation Lifesaver

Idaho Operation Lifesaver is a non profit state organization that is dedicated to increasing public awareness of the potential dangers that exist at highway-rail grade crossings and around trains in general.



Volunteers from various sponsoring groups and other interested individuals staff the organization. Because of the IPUC's railroad safety oversight, it has taken a leading role in sponsoring and supporting Idaho Operation Lifesaver. IPUC staff member Chris Adams is the area coordinator. Volunteer staff members talk to approximately 130,000 people each year at presentations and safety booths.

It is the intent of the program to achieve its goal by using:

- (1) Education – Educate the public about trains by providing safety presentations and by operating informational booths.
- (2) Engineering – Work with government entities, businesses and railroads to improve highway/rail intersections.
- (3) Enforcement – Work with law enforcement agencies and railroads to enforce traffic laws pertaining to highway/rail intersections.

Railroads In Idaho

Palouse River Railroad
709 N. 10th Street
Walla Walla, Washington 99362
509/522-1464
Idaho Track Miles: 2

Idaho Northern & Pacific
P.O.Box 715
Emmett, Idaho 83617
208/365-6353
Idaho Track Miles: 102

Burlington Northern Railroad
176 East 5th Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101
208/263-2016
Idaho Track Miles: 194

Montana Rail Link
P.O.Box 8779
Missoula, Montana 59807
406/523-1500
Idaho Track Miles: 34

Camas Prairie Railnet
325 Mill Road
Lewiston, Idaho 83501
208/798-8393
Idaho Track Miles: 174

St. Maries River Railroad
318 North 10th Street
St. Maries, Idaho 83861
208/245-4531
Idaho Track Miles: 71

Eastern Idaho Railroad
618 Shoshone Street West
Twin Falls, Idaho 83301
208/733-4686
Idaho Track Miles: 267

Union Pacific Railroad
1416 Dodge Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68179
208/343-1771
Idaho Track Miles: 1,096

Railroad Cases

June 10, 2002

PUC GRANTS RAIL COMPANY'S MOTION TO REDUCE REGULATORY FEE

Case No. SMR-R-02-1, Order No. 20045

The Idaho Public Utilities Commission approved a motion by St. Maries River Railroad Company objecting to amount of the annual regulatory fee the company must pay the commission. The commission ordered that a portion of the fee be returned to the company.

The commission's operating funds are derived by assessing regulatory fees on utilities and railroads under the commission's jurisdiction. By April 1 of each year, the state's eight railroad corporations must report their gross operating revenue from their intrastate railroad business in Idaho. When all railroads have reported their revenues, the total is divided by the amount the Legislature has authorized the commission to spend regulating railroads. For example, for the fiscal year that ends June 30, 2003, the amount attributed to regulating railroads is \$137,000.

After making one of its semi-annual installments of \$5,424.32, St. Maries asserted that it over-reported its gross operating revenue, inadvertently including its *interstate* revenue as well as its *intrastate* revenue. The result was St. Maries over-reporting \$847,767 of revenue. PUC staff conducted an audit and agreed with the railroad that its operating revenues had been over-reported. The commission ordered a refund of \$1,290.33 to the railroad.

The commission also ruled that the other railroads not be reassessed to make up for the budget shortfall created as a result of the revised St. Maries regulatory fee. Instead, the commission decided to forego approximately \$6,715 in assessments, resulting in a 5 percent reduction to the commission's FY 2003 railroad budget.